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ABSTRACT

A survey was conducted to determine the level of censorship in Louisiana public libraries. A questionnaire based on a previous survey done by Show Me Libraries in 1982 was sent to 30 public libraries chosen from the northern and southern sections of the state on the basis of population parameters. Surveys were returned from 27 public libraries. Statistics for the responses are discussed and presented in graph form. Sixteen of the 27 surveys returned reported there were censorship problems in their libraries; 11 stated there were no problems. Findings indicated that, while there have been a number of censorship attempts within Louisiana in the last three years, most of the censorship has taken place in the northern portion of the state; methods for dealing with censorship vary greatly; individuals complained and attempted to exercise censorship more than groups such as political, civic, and religious organizations; and books on the subject of sex were the most highly censored. Suggestions for future research conclude the report. A historical background of censorship introduces the survey report, and the censorship survey instrument and cover letter and the American Library Association's "Library Bill of Rights" are appended. (THC)

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The University of Southern Mississippi

Censorship in Louisiana Public Libraries

A Master's Project Submitted to the Faculty
of Library Science in Candidacy for
the Degree of Master's of Library Science

by

Susan Mignon Morse

Hattiesburg, Mississippi

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Historical Background

Censorship is an old story that began as early as recorded literature, if not before.[1] Socrates, who was a martyr for freedom of speech, was sentenced to death in 399 B.C. for irreverence. The Greeks were the first to see an importance in the freedom of speech. As early as the 5th century B.C., books were being burned.[2]

Concepts of censorship were based on the doctrine of the morally good. The doctrine was derived from Plato's Republic and from Thomas Augustas' Summa Theologica.[3] The Roman Catholic Church prohibited the reading of heretical materials. After the invention of the printing press, more sophisticated methods for censorship evolved. A bill was passed in 1501 stating that all printers had the right to license. In 1559, an index of prohibited books was published. This was a major step in early censorship trends.[4]

In the sixteenth century, Christians put much emphasis on obedience and authority. Religious leaders like John Knox, Martin Luther, and John Calvin persecuted the non-conformists. Henry VIII of England burned William Tyndale's New Testament; he also had Thomas More executed because he would not acknowledge the King's authority in matters of religion. Successors of Henry VIII continued to persecute people for their non-conformist attitudes.[5]

Censorship actions were recorded early in U.S. History during the founding of the colonies. Most of the censorship problems involved materials that were thought of as irreverent to God. During this early period of U.S. history, acts of blasphemy were punished by death in Maryland, Plymouth Colony, and the Massachusetts Bay Colony. Book burning began in 1638 when Governor John Winthrop received a request to burn a book because of its erroneous and dangerous content.[6]

Censorship cases involving erotica began in 1668 in the Massachusetts Colony. A suggestive pamphlet was found entitled The Isle of the Pines which belonged to Marmaduke Johnson. This is a story written by George Pines while he was shipwrecked on an island with four women. A description of the island is included in the story, but the controversy was raised over Pine's description of his sexual endeavors with the women. Johnson was fined five pounds and the ruling against him was dropped after he expressed penitence.[7]

Social libraries began with Benjamin Franklin in the early 1720's. Franklin began the library by bringing together close friends to form a Junto. His library company was founded in 1731; this library was the "Mother of all the North American Libraries."[8]

Social library collections varied greatly according to the interests of the people. Some social libraries had popular books in their collection that were circulated while

others did not include fiction, drama, or poetry. On the other hand, some social libraries chose to make book selection decisions by a vote of the members of the library. The library in Rhode Island, for example, prohibited religious and political books which favored a particular sect. Exclusion was the primary way libraries handled controversial issues.[9]

Public libraries evolved as the social libraries declined. Between 1871 and 1875, New Englanders became more interested in the establishment of public libraries. New England had five social libraries to every four public libraries. In the other parts of the country, social libraries prevailed with a 5:1 ratio.[10]

Between 1830 and 1850 there was much pressure for the establishment of a public library. There were education movements, technological advances, and a demand for literature which would compete against Europe's demands. Also, scholars such as Henry Longfellow and George Ticknor studied in Europe; these scholars were impressed with the libraries. As a result, Charles Norton, publisher of the Norton Literary Gazette, held a conference for librarians. The Boston Public Library was founded after a meeting of the scholars. George Ticknor, a Harvard scholar, contributed his efforts and abilities in the founding of this library. Books were to be brought into the homes of many where they would be used to improve personal character.[11]

Ticknor did not deal directly with censorship issues. However, Robert Winthrop, president of the board of commissioners, made clear the position of the Boston Public Library. Reading materials must not involve contention or controversy.[12]

By 1842 many obscenity laws were being passed in the U.S. courts. After the Civil War, censorship issues prevailed. A new term, comstockery, was used to describe the phenomenon.[13] First owner Anthony Comstack conducted a crusade in 1868 to have book dealers arrested for publishing erotic materials. In 1873, Comstack became the Secretary of New York Suppression of Vice and a special agent at the post office. Soon after, President Ulysses Grant passed the "Comstock Law."[14] The law replaced restrictions on mailing indecent and filthy books. When this law was enforced, publishers began to carefully censor language, actions, and heroes in publication.[15]

The librarian's role as censor became more prevalent in the 1880's. During this decade elitism and neutrality were dominant traits of society. Elitism agreed with the library's missionary purpose to bring books to people of profitable influences. Neutrality defined the position of the librarians. They tried to protect themselves from unreasonable appointments or dismissals; in this period it was common for librarians to be replaced as a result of political turnovers.[16]

James M. Hubbard, a former preacher and cataloger, wrote a series of articles in the Boston Sunday Herald which accused librarians of purchasing books that were basicly of only two categories - scholarly and fiction. In 1881, he found an even more controversial issue. He accused the library of buying tasteless books which were read by rich parents and their children. Accusations continued to be made against librarians; they were printed in The Boston Evening Herald.[17] Hubbard attacked the city school systems and suggested four ways to protect youth:

1. setting up a board to censor books
2. labeling harmless books
3. making a special card for children so they could only check-out certain books
4. making a separate card catalog for books that children could check out.[18]

Library supporters came to the rescue as Hubbard continued to cause problems. The Advertiser questioned censorship threats because patrons can be affected differently by books. As a result of the turmoil and chaos caused by Hubbard, a trustees' policy was established. Foreign fiction was prohibited and domestic fiction selected on examination. Bibles and copies of Shakespeare were removed from homes.[19]

Hubbard published a pamphlet that quoted several reviews. The library gave in to pressures and removed all objectionable materials from the shelves. By 1885 the demands of Hubbard were fulfilled:

1. separate cards for children
2. separate juvenile and fiction collections
3. selection limitation

4. delegated authority to librarians to select materials.[20]

The Comstock Law of 1873 was pursued until the twentieth century. It was not challenged by publishers or booksellers until the 1900's. This was the law that provided a framework for morality.[21]

Between 1899 and 1917 libraries flourished with the aid of Andrew Carnegie's contributions. Carnegie was a wealthy businessman who was successful in the steel business. The best gifts that could be provided for a community, according to Carnegie, were public libraries. However, Carnegie seemed to favor censorship; he was in favor of burning pornographic books.[22]

The 1890's brought a period of new morality through European and American authors. Values played an important role in a society focused on populism, neutrality, and censorship. Before 1890, there had been relatively little controversial literature in the United States. Benjamin Franklin was the first American of importance to leave a record of erotic literature. Franklin revealed a lusty sense of humor in the letters he wrote; these letters were not published in his lifetime: today they are found primarily in special collections. Mark Twain followed a similar pattern in writing a lusty letter in 1876. He had no intentions of publishing his documents, but in 1880 four copies were printed by John Hay, the Assistant Secretary of State. This letter, however, did not become an important document in United States history.[23]

The Scarlet Letter was the first book which included sexual content. The novel presents the Puritan concept that sensuality is dangerous and a major cause of moral decay.[24]

During this period of time, what was it that made a book moral or immoral? Corrine Bacon, an Albany student and faculty member, distinguished immorality from coarseness. Tom Jones and Old Wives for New were coarse and full of lusty details, but they did not confuse morals. However, Merrideth's Lord Ormont and Robert Henick's Together did confuse morals. Miss Bacon took a strong stand on censorship issues during the early 1900's.[25] Censorship ideas and opinions changed little from 1890 to the 1920's.

Court case decisions have played a major role in the history of censorship.[26] In the 1894 Worthington case several books were involved: The Decameron, The Heptameron, The Arabian Knights, Gargantua and Pantaguel, and Tom Jones. This civil case involved the bankrupt Worthington Book Company. The question asked of the New York Supreme Court was whether or not these books could be sold. The judicial decision cleared these classics. Over a period of time, the courts decided classics should not be censored. This was an important step for literary values because this erotic fiction had squeezed past the censors.[27]

Many censorship conflicts were prevalent in the early history of the United States.

One must also consider the treatment of children's literature as it relates to censorship. Conflicts of social

issues related to censorship and children's literature have been argued over the years. Do children have rights as adults do in the freedom to choose materials they wish to read? Should children be restricted by moral, social, and political attitudes? Is the issue of censorship truly applicable to children? Until the last few years, society considered censorship standards for children and adults to be two different categories.[28]

Nineteenth century parents controlled their children's lives fully. Children's books were written to teach a moral. Books of this nature were placed in special collections that were developed by public libraries.[29]

Attitudes toward children and books have changed tremendously in the twentieth century. The intensity of current arguments is shown in journal articles and association meetings. Attitudes toward children's literature are a mixture of personal, social, and political convictions.[30]

Children's rooms in public libraries were an important factor by 1900. Library schools and colleges have offered courses in children's literature since 1915. From the early 1900's the the 1960's, censorship was not a significant issue. Libraries usually bought books that were exempt from criticism and ridicule. Cheap series books such as Nancy Drew and Hardy Boys were not found in libraries, but these books were rarely censored. Between 1900 and 1965 there was a code of values observed for children's literature, and it

remained unbroken during this time period. The code is long and is often viewed from the negative as a list of taboos. Treatment of controversial subjects was considered more carefully than the book content itself.[31]

Censorship is still a lively issue in the 1980's as it was at the beginning with the sixteenth century Christians. Society is not changing and the outlooks for peace are slim. Judith Krug, Director of the Office of Intellectual Freedom, American Library Assocation, believes that pressures that have been suppressed are now emerging; pressures to remove materials on moral ground and on the basis of American values are increasing. Arguments relating to censorship issues will continue in America's public libraries. These debates reflect America's views of childhood, society and truth.[32]

The purpose of this paper is to determine the current level of censorship in Louisiana public libraries. How does book selection relate to censorship in public libraries? What is the ratio of freedom to suppression in public libraries? Are sexually explicit material the most censored items? How does the Library Bill of Rights help librarians handle censorship problems? This study will examine the problems stated as they relate to censorship.

Review of the Literature

Censorship, being a major issue in today's society, has been reviewed in several studies. Charles Busha and Marjorie Fiske's studies are major milestones in library science on the subject of censorship. These studies found that certain catagories are censored all over the United States as well as in Louisiana. Topics of this nature are discussed in this study; they include sex, politics, obsenity, and religion. These catagories were also included in the questionnaire. Furthermore, studies have been reviewed on public libraries and censorship issued in the United States and there was also a study entitled Censorship in Louisiana: 1966-1980.

There have been two major studies done on censorship that relate to public libraries. Marjorie Fiske's Book Selection and Censorship represented a major step forward in library research. Fisk's study indicates that censorship in California libraries was the librarian's responsibility. Charles Busha's study Freedom vs. Suppression and Censorship states that libraries surveyed in the Midwest have a more liberal attitude toward censorship than what they practice.[33]

The Fiske study covers school and public library systems in a wide range of communities in the state of California. Twenty-six communities were selected and the field work consisted of 204 interviews. Within each

library, interviews were done with staff members who were responsible for book selection. The study focused on the restrictive practices that spontaneously take place in public and school libraries with no apparent external causes.[34]

Statistics from the study indicate that public librarians have more liberal views than school librarians. While 72% of the public libraries expressed strong views on the freedom to read, only 5% expressed restrictive ideas. Librarians that did express restrictive views were usually ones who had no professional training. Attitudes of librarians who are neutral toward censorship conflicts seemed to be inconsistent with principles set forth in the Library Bill of Rights and the Freedom to Read Statement.[35]

Most librarians that expressed views on book selection procedures where controversial books were involved decided not to purchase the book. Approximately 20% of librarians habitually avoid buying controversial books. Many librarians, however, did not take controversy into account.[36]

Controversial materials are often restricted from circulation and distribution. Findings in this study show that 82% of the libraries have some form of restriction. Frequent forms of restriction are as follows: placing the book in an office (33%), placing the book on reserve (33%), and placing the book behind the front desk (27%). More

public libraries than school libraries restrict materials and they exercise more forms of restriction.[37]

Many librarians use selection tools to support complaints. According to one public librarian, a book is controversial and can be restricted from the library if reviews about the book disagree. Public librarians in rural communities are more likely to use book reviews.[38]

Busha's study used the survey method to investigate how much public librarians in the Midwestern United States accept concepts defined in the "Library Bill of Rights" and the "Freedom to Read Statement." Also, the study considers attitudes of librarians toward censorship practices.[39]

From a population of 3,253 public librarians, a stratified random sample of 900 individuals was chosen. States included in the survey were as follows: Illinois, Indiana, Michigan, Ohio, and Wisconsin. Seventy percent, or 624, of the questionnaires were returned and coded.[40]

Findings of this study reveal that approximately 14% of the public librarians were sympathetic toward censorship. Only 22% of the librarians were strongly against censorship. Attitudes of the remaining 64% were neutral. The majority of the pro-censorship attitudes were held by librarians in high positions, usually directors of public libraries. Only 20% of librarians with pro-censorship attitudes had master's degrees. Pro-censorship attitudes were stronger among females around the age of 45.[41]

In contrast, 22% of the respondents were classified as anti-censorship. Sizes of cities and positions held varied greatly among librarians having anti-censorship attitudes. Fifty-one percent of anti-censorship librarians were over age 45 while the remaining librarians ranged in age from 25 to 42. Anti-censorship librarians usually had a master's degree (74%); 12% had attained undergraduate degrees from four year colleges.[42]

In conclusion, both studies had different approaches and they examined different geographic areas of the United States, but the conclusions were very similar. Both studies stated that most librarians do practice censorship and are in favor of suppressing materials in libraries.[43]

A study was done by L. B. Woods entitled A Decade of Censorship in America: A Threat to Classrooms and Libraries, 1966-1975. Wood's study showed that during the years surveyed the highest number of censorship attempts in public libraries occurred between 1967 and 1972. The percentage of censorship attempts was not as high as expected, but this could be for several reasons. First, this may reflect the failure of public libraries to report attempts in an effort to keep things quiet. Also, public libraries are so different from college or school libraries; public libraries have materials covering vast subjects and do not aim to support a certain curriculum. However, most public libraries receive complaints about language in books,

usually novels and materials that deal with politics, religion, and sex.[44]

Public libraries during this decade were censored less than university or high school libraries, but they were censored more than other school level libraries. There are many censorship attempts in public libraries, but most of them are controversial.[45]

The most censored title, J. D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye, with forty-one attempts, show no sign of tapering off because the book has a bad reputation. Twenty censorship attempts have been made on Soul on Ice. The other most censored books were as follows: Manchild in the Promiseland (15), Go Ask Alice (14), and Catch 22 by Joseph Keller (10).[46]

Between 1966 and 1975, public libraries in the United States received 74 censorship attempts; only 35.8% of these attempts were successful while 32.1% were unsuccessful. In the United States, 912 censorship attempts occurred. California, with 123 attempts in public libraries, was the state with the highest number of censorship attempts. Louisiana received 10 attempts which was 1.1% of the total attempts. South Dakota and Hawaii reported no attempts.[47]

Sex and the Undecided Librarian is a study of the opinions of librarians on sexually oriented literature. When this study was done in 1974, there had not been any other study done focusing on sexually oriented literature. The questionnaires posed acquisitional questions related to

sex literature. The most restrictive public libraries were those that served less than 10,000 patrons while the least restrictive were the librarians serving over 250,000 patrons.

Public libraries were not affected by geographic locations, however school libraries were affected.[48]

White's study uses the survey method to reveal more about the pro-censorship and anti-censorship groups. He compares the two groups in several ways: background, attitudes, and experiences.[49]

Persons who are against censorship in libraries tend to hold more liberal views toward sexual attitudes. Statistics indicate that as age increases, pro-censorhip issues decrease. Also, as opposition to censorship increases,educational experiences, mass media consumption, and exposure to erotic materials all increased.[50]

People in their twenties are more opposed to censorship than any other age group. Opposition to censorship is highest among college graduates. As for the sex of the persons polled, men are more liberal than women on the issues of censorship.[51]

Minority positions are usually those that are opposed to library censorship. For example, opposition is common among male graduates. However, this is the case only for about two people out of every five.[52]

The people who oppose censorship are younger, well-educated, media oriented, and liberal in many ways.

Anticensorship attitudes are based on liberal ideals such as racial integration and environmentalism awareness. It is also interesting to note that the anticensorship groups have many similarities to those groups identified in public library user studies. Therefore, it is assumed that the anticensorship groups, who are in the minority, are also in the other minority, library users.[53]

Reports show that 75% of the public libraries purchasing books with strong sexual content find it necessary to keep them restricted. Libraries that have chosen not to buy books on the subject of sex explain that they fear books of that nature will be stolen. In contrast, libraries that keep openshelved controversial books have reported minimal problems with theft. Opinion differences have directly related to the attitude of the librarian. There are strong arguments, however, for keeping sex related materials on the shelves as a result of the patron's reluctance and embarrassment in having to ask for them.[54]

Librarians can not have an equal number of books to support all sides of political issues. They must follow the flow of book publication. However, there are some essential books related to every political issue that should be included in a public library collection. Example are as follows: The Communist Manifesto, Mein Kampf, and the Blue Book.[55]

Obscenity is another major issue that causes problems with censorship. In New Orleans there is a new ordinance

based on the Ginzberg vs. New York Case. Any individual has the right to walk into a book store or Public library and demand that materials be taken off the shelf. If the librarians or bookstore owner does not follow up on the request, he is liable for criminal prosecution.[56]

Are libraries offering services to conservative religious groups? Librarians are becoming more and more interested in this issue. Carl Thomas defines censorship as follows:

> Censorship by definition is an act of suppression carried out from a position of power, sometimes for the common good, but often out of fear of exposure to other ideas or plain self interest.57

Thomas also says that secularists have most of the power in censorship issues.

Public libraries are not used exclusively for religious books. Christians are not limited to reading materials on religion; for example, they may ask for the religious best seller as well as a suspense novel. Libraries do serve conservative Christians in many ways. Librarians have often fallen short in providing reviews. Also, publishers for Christians books play a role in this problem. They tend to be reluctant to sell to the mainstream book trade. If Christians want their books in libraries, Christian book publishers need to become a part of the mainstream booktrade.[58]

Librarians can improve the service to religious groups in many ways. Community analysis is important; librarians should realize the nature and size of the religious

community. Also, a library staff member can take the initiative to get to know community religious leaders, attend meetings, and try to help solve their daily concerns. If necessary, the library may develop an information and retrieval file.[59]

Collection development can be improved even if there is a lack of reviews. Librarians can visit the local Christian bookstore and talk with religious leaders. Also, there are some major Christian periodicals that do provide some reviews.[60]

Public libraries are affected often by censorship. Forty-four cases were reported and 996 different items were considered for censorship. Books received over 98% of the attacks; films were in second place with 1.4% attacks.[61]

Research showed that there were five categories for censorship sources. Approximately one-third of the attempts were made by public officials; they felt it was their duty to uphold morality in the community. The other groups included churches, citizen groups, citizens, and parents.[62]

The primary reason given for censorship was that the materials were not appropriate for children. There are two categories for censorship procedures of children's books: 1) removal of material from the collection, 2) restricted use of the adult collection for children.[63]

Over the five years that were polled, only 23% of the censorship cases were successful. Fifty-nine percent were unsuccessful and 18% were unknown cases. The censorship

battle continues to become more fierce as society becomes more conservative.[64]

Louisiana is a state that has different points of view. The state is noted for various ethnic backgrounds and it is noted for Cajun influence in the Southern part of the state.[65]

Censorship cases in the Newsletter of Intellectual Freedom are analyzed in this study. Louisiana's censorship rates are below the national average. Only 33 cases out of 2,950 occurred in the state of Louisiana. Other cases from the Newsletter have been tabulated; approximately 15% of the cases are reported so the actual number of cases occurring in Louisiana is much higher.[66]

Censorship sources include groups as well as individuals. The main attempts were made on the public school systems. The cases occurred after 1975. Eight of the ten reports were directed toward schools.[67]

Major censorship targets in Louisiana were books. The Louisiana State University Yearbook, Gumbo, was attacked for including nude photography. There were several attempts made in public schools and against East Baton Rouge Parish. The complaints included The American Heritage Dictionary and Best Short Stories by Negro Writers.[68]

Most of the censorship attempts occurred in heavily populated areas, namely Baton Rouge and New Orleans. The remainder of the cases were scattered through the state. Four attempts on educational institutions were made in East

Baton Rouge Parish and two attempts were made in New Orleans. Non-educational institutions received 12 attempts.[69]

Librarians as professionals must take a stand against censorship. Only by opposing the censor and debating the efforts of the censor can the librarian claim expertise in material selection. That is one of the main jobs of the librarians and a primary reason for the librarian's existence.[70]

Library Bill of Rights

Intellectual freedom in public libraries can be insured as long as the collection relates to the interests and concerns of the community. Public libraries are an easy target for censors. The library may be subject to attack if the materials do not go along with a certain doctrine or if they threaten the views of a system. A librarian should realize that every age has its censors and various books have been banned at one time or another. Examples range from Shakespeare, the Bible, J. D. Salinger's Catcher in the Rye, to Mark Twain's Huckleberry Finn.[71]

The Library Bill of Rights was adopted by American Library Association in 1939 which clearly states the librarian's responsibility to equally represent different political and social points of view within the library collection. The Library Bill of Rights was revised in 1984; it has been revised prior to 1984 in 1961 and 1967.

Revisions were results of changes taking place in relation to concepts of the library.[72]

In 1940, the Intellectual Freedom Committee was established. The committee was formed to protect the rights of library users based on the United States Bill of Rights and the Library Bill of Rights. Some of the major issues that are stated in the Library Bill of Rights include labeling, free access to minors, and expurgation.[73]

Labeling is the act of prejudging materials. The American Library Association states in the Library Bill of Rights its strong opposition to labeling. The American Library Association is against any attempt to terminate paths of knowledge.[74]

Libraries often deny children and young adults free access to all materials in libraries. Article Five in the Library Bill of Rights states that no one should be denied the right to access library materials and services. Children, therefore, should have the same rights and privileges that adults have in libraries.[75]

In December 1971 the Caldwell Parish Library in Louisiana had the following report:

> Maurice Sendak might faint but a staff member of Caldwell parish Library, knowing that the patrons might object to illustrations in In the Night Kitchen, solved the problem by diapering the little boys with white tempera paint. Other libraries might wish to do the same.76

As a result, a publisher of Harper Junior Books sent a letter to 380 librarians and educators in the United States:

> At first, the thought of librarians painting diapers or pants on the naked hero of Sendak's book might seem amusing, merely a harmless eccentricity on the part of some prim few. On reconsideration, however, this behavior should be recognized for what it is: an act of censorship by mutilation rather than by obvious suppression.77

In 1972 the ALA conference considered the expurgation issue and if it was already covered by the Library Bill of Rights. A statement was adopted by the ALA and added to the policy in 1973.[78]

Louisiana, the Bayou State and the Sportsman's Paradise, is surrounded by Texas, Arkansas, and Mississippi. Alexandria is geographically located in the center of the state; it divides the state into two parts. The north is dominated by rolling hills, forest, and delta. Citizens of north Louisiana are generally Anglo-Saxon and Protestant in religious faith. The population descended from the pioneers of neighboring states that were part of the westward movement. In contrast, South Louisiana is predominantly French and Catholic. Bayous and marshes bordered the Gulf of Mexico. Descendants are from French and Spanish settlers and the French exiles from Nova Scotia.[79]

Methodology

A survey was conducted to indicate the level of censorship in Louisiana public libraries. Thirty public libraries were chosen from the state of Louisiana. They were chosen on the basis of population parameters in the northern and southern sections of Louisiana. Larger libraries were in cities of 80,000 or more. Medium

libraries ranged from 23,365 to 80,000 while small libraries were those in cities with 23,365 population or less. Five libraries were placed in each division for both the north and south. The questionnaire was based on a previous survey done by Show Me Libraries in 1982. Questionnaires were sent in mid-September and in the latter part of October. A cover letter was enclosed that stated the purpose of the survey.

Results of the Study

Statistics of the responses are presented in graph form and are discussed. Graphs are used to illustrate the statistical responses indicated in the questionnaire results. Twenty-seven surveys were returned from a total of thirty. Sixteen of the twenty-seven returned reported that there are censorship problems; eleven stated there are no problems. Three of the questionnaires returned do not indicate where they were from, therefore they are not used in showing the statistics. Eleven questionnaires were returned from north Louisiana; thirteen were returned from south Louisiana. Eight of the eleven north Louisiana surveys (73%) indicated that there are censorship problems. Only six questionnaires from the south stated that there are problems with censorship (Figure 1).

Seventeen of the respondents for question two replied that they have a written policy for handling censorship complaints (Figure 1). Seven of the respondents were from the northern part of the state and ten from the southern. In answering question three, several of the respondents

checked two answers. Fourteen respondents said the library director was responsible for developing the policy while twelve of the people surveyed said the library board wrote the policy (Figure 2). Three of respondents answered with other comments. Fifteen of the twenty-four respondents have a formally adopted policy approved by the governing body (Question 4). Seven north Louisiana directors said they had a formal policy; only one reply stated they did not. In the south, eight respondents said they did have a policy; two respondents said they did not (Figure 1). Question five asked how often the policy was used. Only fifteen of the people surveyed answered the question. Seven directors said the policy was used fully; four were from the north and three from the south. Seven of the returned surveys indicated that the policy was used occasionally. Three of these were from the north; four were from the south (Figure 3).

Are complaints referred to the administration? Question six received twenty-two answers; all of these answers were yes. Ten respondents were from the north and twelve were from the south (Figure 1).

Answers varied on question number seven which asked about procedures followed in response to censorship complaints. Nine stated the book was retained; five were from the north and four from the south. Only two stated that the book was put under restriction; one was from the south and one from the north. Two respondents also replied

the book would be removed; once again one was from the north and one was from the south (Figure 4).

Question eight asked how Louisiana libraries handle the purchase of the library materials. Twenty-two of the respondents answered the question; according to data, fourteen libraries chose to buy the books. Eight of those responding were from the north and six were from the south. Four decided to buy the book and place restrictions on it; two were from the north and two from the south. Four respondents from the north chose not to purchase the controversial materials (Figure 5).

Who censors books? What groups are primarily responsible for censorship complaints? Most of the respondents answered that individuals cause most of the problems (75%). Ten were from the north; eight were from the south. Statistics from north Louisiana indicate 8% of the problems are from political groups and 8% are caused by religious groups. However, 91% of the problems in the north were caused by individuals. On the other hand, 62% of the problems in the south are caused by individuals. No other answers were recorded (Figure 6).

Titles were chosen from various sources for question ten. Only 17% of the respondents indicated the listed titles that had been censored. In the south, one respondent answered that there were controversies with novels written by Judy Blume. Two respondents from the north and one from

the south indicated that The Joy of Sex is a book that is censored often (Figure 7).

Subjects that were most controversial were strong sexual content and profanity. Fifty-five percent of the respondents in the north and 68% of the respondents in the south indicated controversies relating to books that have strong sexual content. Data indicated profanity was a controversial subject for 54% of the respondents from the south and 64% from the north. Only 9% of the respondents indicated conflicts with abortion and evolution.

Books on homosexuality and morality presented censorship problems for 18% of the libraries in the north. Violence was a controversial subject for 9% of the libraries in the north and 8% of the libraries in the south (Figures 8 and 9).

Several participants in the questionnaire chose to write comments in addition to answering the provided questions.

Returns from St. Martin Parish commented that they had not received any complaints since the written policy was established. The librarians are fortunate to have broad-minded patrons that are too apathetic to complain.

Iberville Parish Library reported that they had never had the problem arise as to whether to buy a controversial book (Number 8). Also, comments on number nine stated that the titles listed had not been censored except Judy Blume's last book which they have not received.

New Orleans Public Library stated that they had received only two or three complaints in the last three years. They do not have a written policy, but they do have a form entitled "The Citizen's Request for Reconsideration of Library Material" which was enclosed with the questionnaire. No standard procedure has been established for retaining books or removing them. Each case is handled on an individual basis. However, no books have been removed because of complaints about content. As for titles censored, one complaint was received over five years ago about Judy Blume's Forever. The only complaint received about The Joy of Sex is simply that the copies are usually missing. No clear pattern has been established with controversial subject, but most deal with sex or homosexuality. Age level (young adult) presents more of a problem than content.

Returns from Allen Parish Library indicated that complaints that are not handled to the patron's satisfaction are dealt with by the administration. In most cases, staff members handle problems that arise and the administration is informed.

The Lafouche Parish Library director commented on several questions. Standard procedures for handling censorship complaints are simply to handle each complaint on its own. They also stated that they consider each purchase separately for usefulness in the collections. There are very few books that have restrictions. There has never been

a formal action to request removal of materials. Patrons do not cause many problems in the library according to the director.

The West Baton Rouge Parish librarian reported that books are studied and re-evaluated by the director. So far, no book has been removed from evaluation. The library attempts to purchase books that reflect both sides of a controversial subject.

Reports from Caddo Parish say that books receiving complaints are reviewed by a committee. Each complaint is handled on an individual basis. Subjects are reviewed well before purchases are made. However, the library will buy the book if it is needed in the collection.

Figure 1

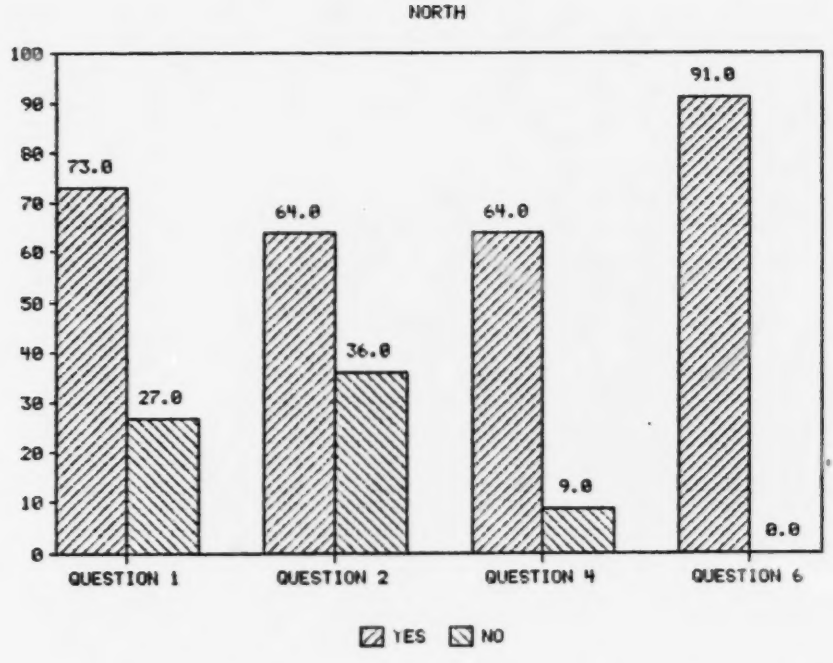

NORTH
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
73.0
27.0
64.0
36.0
64.0
9.0
91.0
0.0
QUESTION 1
QUESTION 2
QUESTION 4
QUESTION 6
YES
NO

Figure 1 (Cont'd)

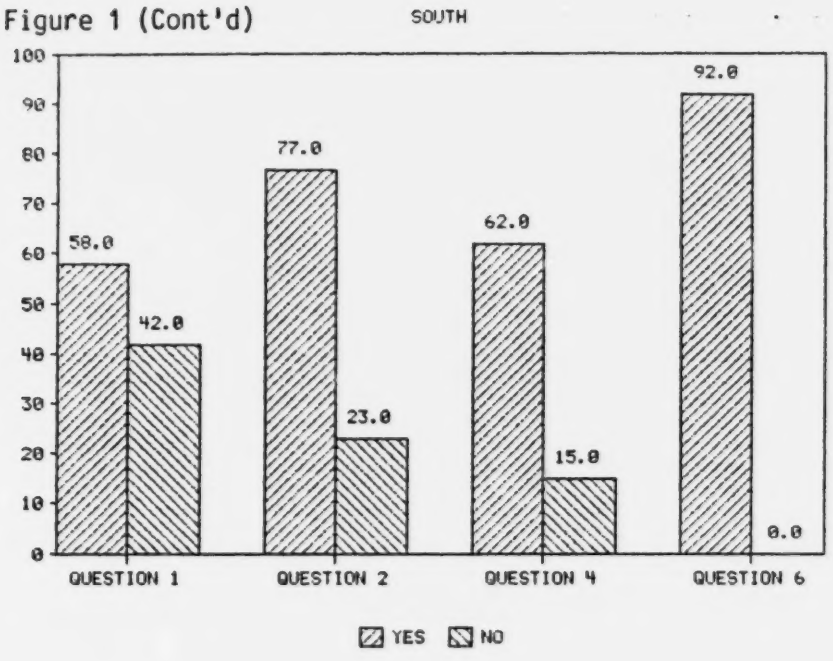


Figure 2

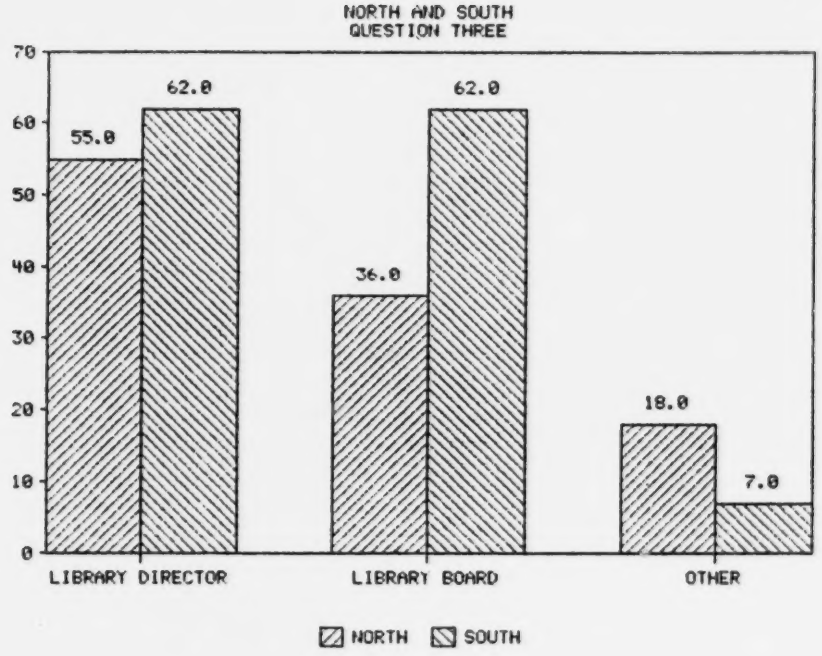

NORTH AND SOUTH
QUESTION THREE
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
55.0
62.0
36.0
62.0
18.0
7.0
LIBRARY DIRECTOR
LIBRARY BOARD
OTHER
NORTH
SOUTH

Figure 3

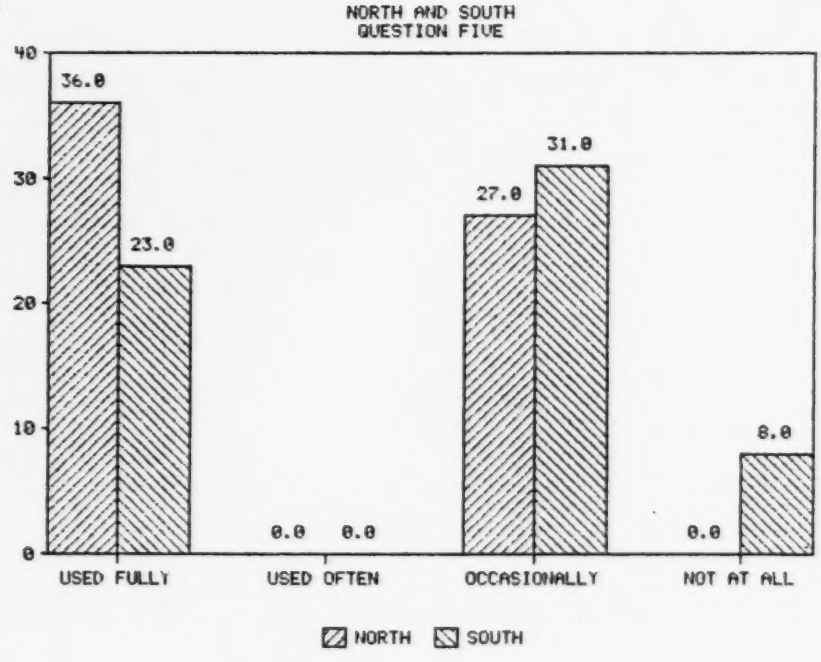

NORTH AND SOUTH
QUESTION FIVE
40
30
20
10
0
36.0
23.0
0.0
0.0
27.0
31.0
0.0
8.0
USED FULLY
USED OFTEN
OCCASIONALLY
NOT AT ALL
NORTH
SOUTH

Figure 4

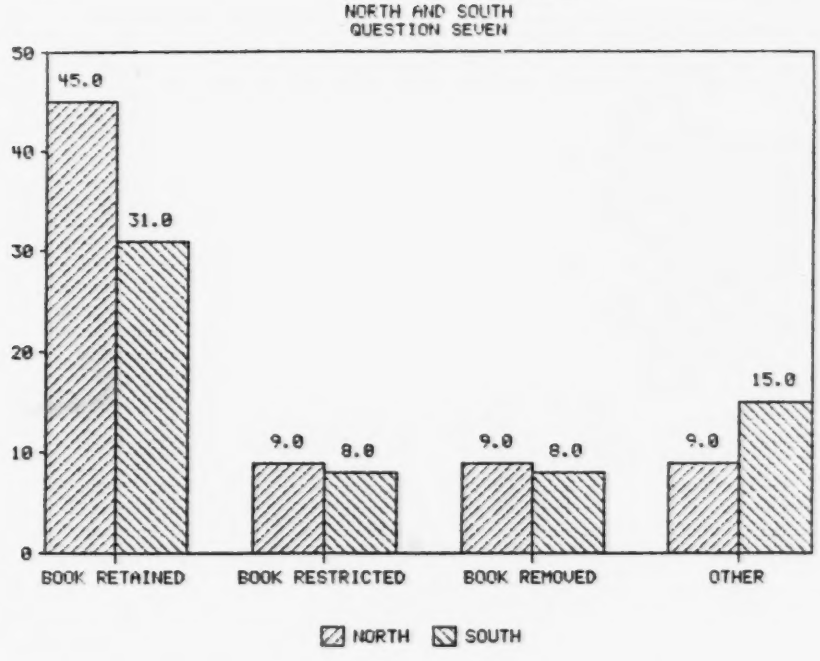

NORTH AND SOUTH
QUESTION SEVEN
50
40
30
20
10
0
45.0
31.0
9.0
8.0
9.0
8.0
9.0
15.0
BOOK RETAINED
BOOK RESTRICTED
BOOK REMOVED
OTHER
NORTH
SOUTH

Figure 5

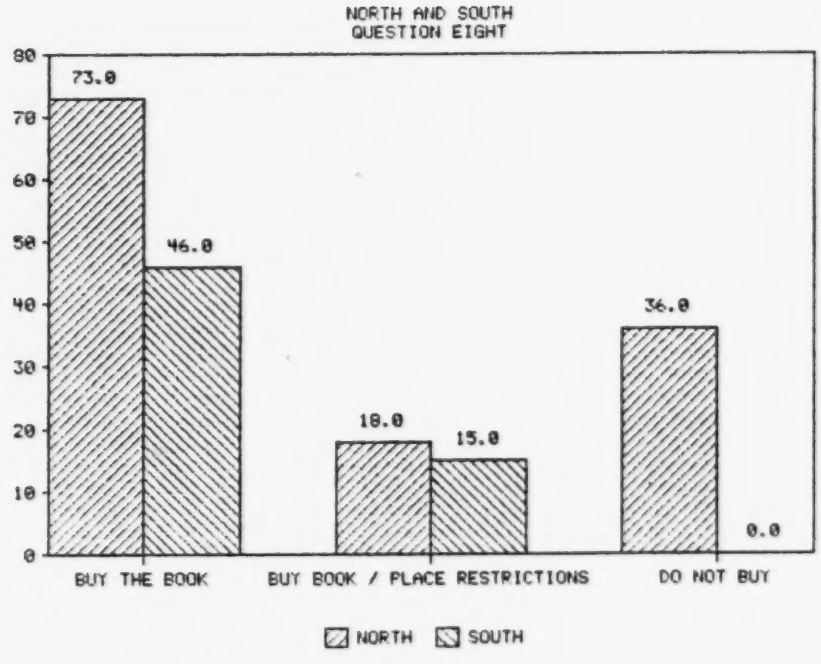

NORTH AND SOUTH
QUESTION EIGHT
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
73.0
46.0
18.0
15.0
36.0
0.0
BUY THE BOOK
BUY BOOK / PLACE RESTRICTIONS
DO NOT BUY
NORTH
SOUTH

Figure 6

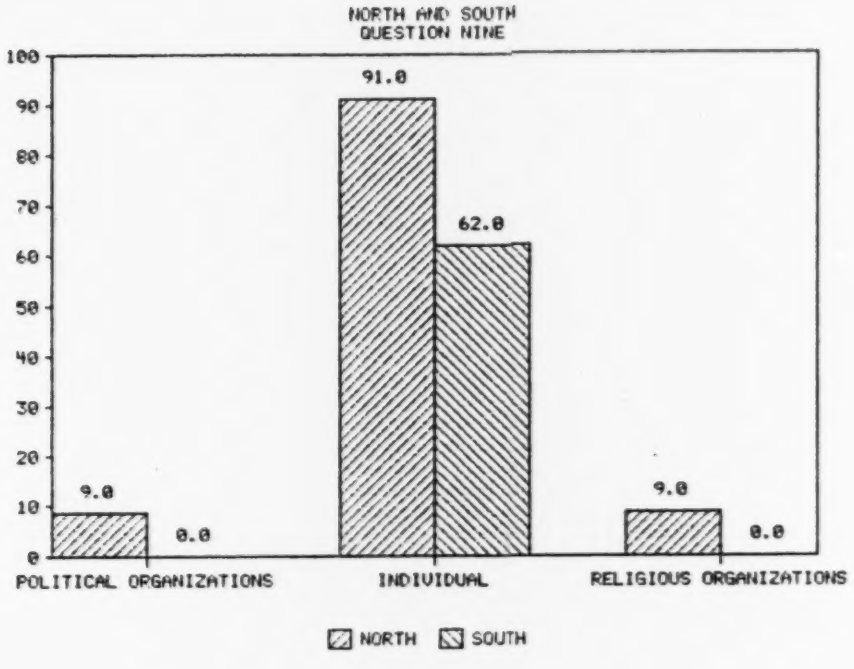

NORTH AND SOUTH
QUESTION NINE
100
90
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
91.0
62.0
9.0
0.0
9.0
0.0
POLITICAL ORGANIZATIONS
INDIVIDUAL
RELIGIOUS ORGANIZATIONS
NORTH
SOUTH

Figure 7

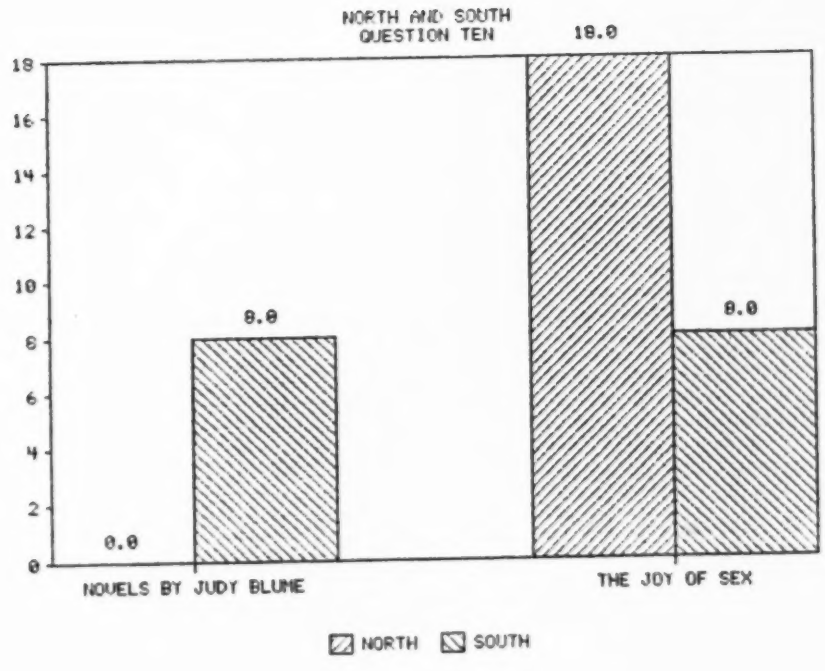

NORTH AND SOUTH
QUESTION TEN
18.0
8.0
8.0
0.0
18
16
14
12
10
8
6
4
2
0
NOVELS BY JUDY BLUME
THE JOY OF SEX
NORTH
SOUTH

Figure 8

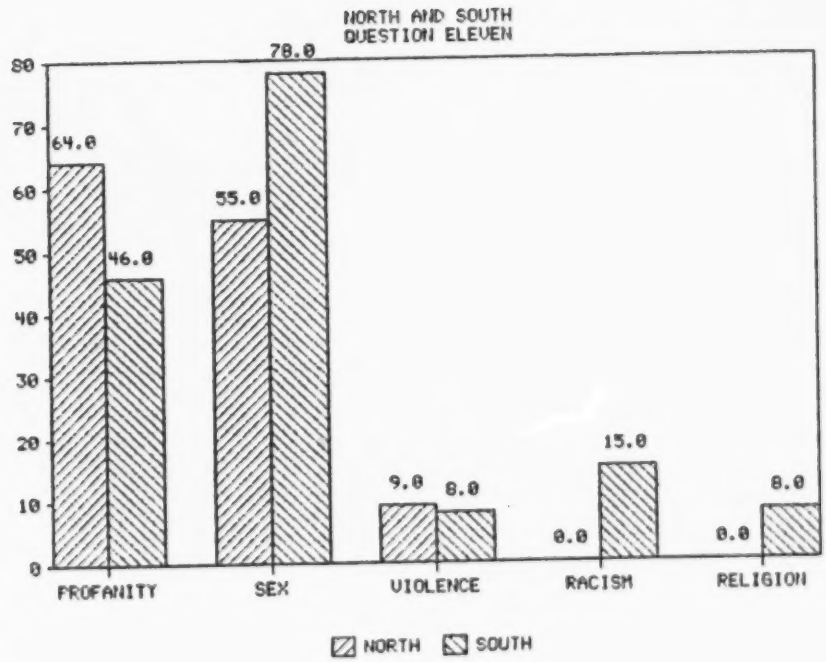
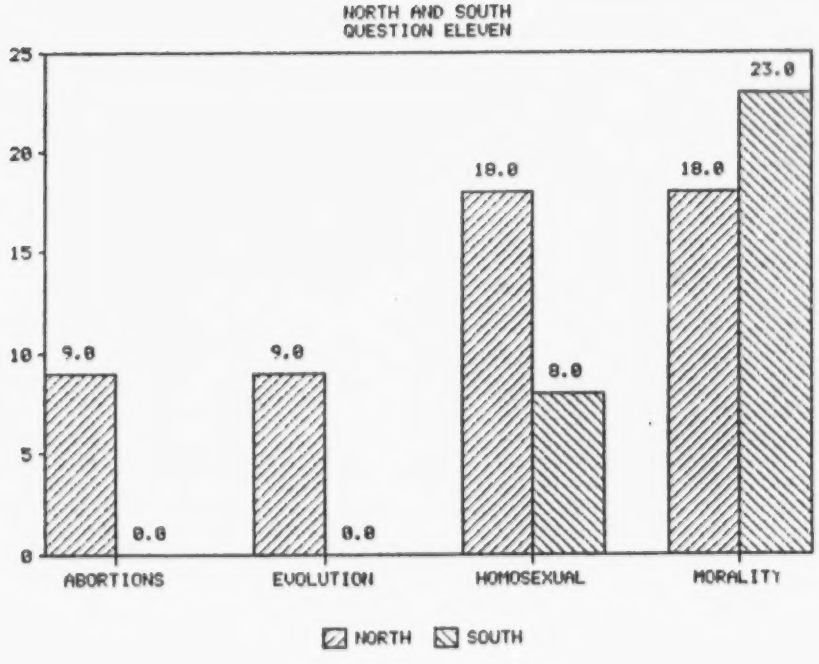

NORTH AND SOUTH
QUESTION ELEVEN
80
70
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
64.0
46.0
55.0
78.0
9.0
8.0
0.0
15.0
0.0
8.0
PROFANITY
SEX
VIOLENCE
RACISM
RELIGION
NORTH
SOUTH

Figure 9


NORTH AND SOUTH
QUESTION ELEVEN
25
20
15
10
5
0
9.0
0.0
9.0
0.0
18.0
8.0
18.0
23.0
ABORTIONS
EVOLUTION
HOMOSEXUAL
MORALITY
NORTH
SOUTH

Suggestions for Further Research

Several suggestions can be made for further research. The total population could be included in a survey of censorship in Louisiana. In addition, interviews could be held with public library directors. A study that includes a sampling of interviews would have more details and the reader would have a fuller understanding of the censorship level in the state of Louisiana. Furthermore, surveys could be conducted for academic, public, and school libraries to determine the censorship levels. Statistics from the three types of libraries could be compared.

Conclusions

The analysis of the data indicates the censorship level for portions of Louisiana that were surveyed. There have been a number of censorship attempts in Louisiana within the last three years. Most of the censorship attempts have occurred in the northern portion of the state. Methods for dealing with censorship attempts vary greatly. Individuals complained more and attempted to exercise censorship more than organized groups such as political, civic, or religious groups. There are numerous subjects that are often censored. However, results show that books on the subject of sex are the most highly censored.

General questions in the questionnaire show that the northern section of Louisiana is more conservative than the southern part of the state. However, question 10 that dealt with catagories of censorship showed variations. For

example, sex is more of an issue in the south than it is in the north. Profanity is more of an issue in the north than the south while the catagory of violence is about the same amount of controversy for north and south. One can see that highly censored catagories in Louisiana are controversial throughout the United States. Busha's and Fiske's studies both conclude in a similar manner as this study of Louisiana public libraries. All of these studies conclude in showing there are similar controversies in certain subject areas throughout the United States.

New Orleans is the largest metropolitan area in the state of Louisiana. It has been an important city in the establishment and growth of the state. It is noteworthy to consider that censorship has not been a major issue in the city of New Orleans. Librarians from New Orleans Public stated that only two or three censorship complaints have been received.

In conclusion, there are censorship problems in the state of Louisiana for public libraries. Problems occur in Louisiana as they do throughout the United States. The debates of censorship reflect America's views of society and truth. Though the censorship problems are likely to continue, there is hope that education and communication will effect the views of today's society.

ENDNOTES

[1]Robert B. Downs and Ralph E. McCoy, ed., The First Freedom Today: Critical Issues Relating to Censorship and to Intellectual Freedom. (Chicago: American Library Association, 1984), p. 110.

[2]Allen Kent and Harold Lancour, ed., Encyclopedia of Library and Information Science. (New York: Marcel Dekker, 1970), p. 329.

[3]E. J. Stielow, "Censorship and Early Professionalism of American Libraries: 1876 to 1929." Journal of Library History 18 (Winter 1983): 37-54.

[4]Kent and Allen, Encyclopedia of Library Science, 329-330.

[5]Ibid, p. 330.

[6]Felice Flanery Lewis, Literature, Obsenity, and the Law, (Carbondale and Edwardsville: Southern Illinois Unversity Press, 1976), p. 1-2.

[7]Lewis, Literature, Obsenity, and the Law, p. 1-3.

[8]Jesse Sherra. Foundations of the Public Library: The Origins of the Public Library Movement in New England 1629-1855. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1949) p. 31-32.

[9]Evelyn Geller. "The Librarian as Censor." Library Journal 101 (June 1, 1976): p. 1255-1258.

[10]Haynes McMullen. "The Very Slow Decline of the American Social Library," Library Quarterly 55 (April, 1985): 207-225.

[11]Evelyn Geller. Forbidden Books in American Public Libraries, 1876-1939. (Westport: Greenwood Press, 1984) p. 10.

[12]Ibid, p. 10.

[13]Stielow, p. 38.

[14]Lewis, Literature, Obsenity and the Law, p. 10.

[15]Geller, Forbidden Books in American Public Libraries, 1876-1939, p. 22.

[16]Ibid, p. 29-30.

[17]Ibid, p. 32-33.

[18]Ibid, p. 33.

[19]Ibid, p. 33-35.

[20]Ibid, p. 34.

[21]Geller, Librarian as Censor, p.

[22]Geller, Forbidden Books in American Public Libraries, p. 85-86.

[23]Lewis, Literature, Obsenity and the Law, p. 12-15.

[24]Ibid, p. 15.

[25]Geller, Forbidden Books in American Public Libraries, p. 92.

[26]Lewis, Literature, Obsenity, and the Law, p. 25.

[27]Ibid, p. 27, 43-45.

[28]A.S. Macheod. "Censorship and Children's Literature" Library Quarterly 53 (January 1983): 26-28.

[29]Ibid.

[30]Ibid.

[31]Ibid.

[32]Ibid.

[33]Charles Busha. Freedom vs. Suppression and Censorship. (Littlton, CO: Libraries Unlimited, 1972) p. 19.

[34]Marjorie Fiske. Book Selection and Censorship. (Berkeley: University of California, 1968) p. 1-6.

[35]Ibid, p. 64-65.

[36]Ibid, p. 64-65.

[37]Ibid, p. 68-69.

[38]Ibid, p. 68-69.

[39]Busha, Freedom vs. Suppression and Censorship, p. 139.

[40]Ibid.

[41]Ibid, p. 141-142.

[42]Ibid.

[43]Ibid.

[44]L. B. Woods. A Decade of Censorship in America: The Threat of Classrooms and Libraries, 1966-1975. (Metuchen: Scarecrow, 1979): p. 76.

[45]Ibid, p. 149.

[46]Ibid, p. 150.

[47]Ibid, p. 40-47.

[48]Ibid, p. 7, 111, 129.

[49]Howard D. White. "Library Censorship and the Permissive Minority." Library Quarterly. 51 (1981): 192-207.

[50]Ibid.

[51]Ibid.

[52]Ibid.

[53]Ibid.

[54]Downs and McCoy, The First Freedom Today: Critical Issues Relating to Censorship and Intellectual Freedom, p. 104.

[55]Ibid, p. 105.

[56]Ibid, p. 217.

[57]P. Deane. "Serving Conservative Christians." Southeastern Librarian 33 (Winter 1983): p. 92-94.

[58]Ibid, p. 92-94.

[59]Ibid, p. 92-94.

[60]Ibid, p. 92-94.

[61]L. B. Woods and S. B. Weghorst, "Eye of the Beholder: Recent Attempts fof Censorship in the American Public Library." Public Libraries (Spring 1983): pp. 18-20.

[62]Ibid.

[63]Ibid.

[64]Ibid.

[65]L.B. Woods and R. Dumais. "Censorship in Louisiana, 1966-1980." Louisiana Library Association Bulletin. 45 (Spring 1983): 189-96.

[66]Ibid.

[67]Ibid.

[68]Ibid.

[69]Ibid.

[70]Ibid.

[71]American Library Association. Office for Intellectual Freedom. Intellectual Freedom Manual. Chicago: American Library Association, 1983.

[72]Downs and McCoy, The First Freedom Today: Critical Issues Relating to Censorship and to Intellectual Freedom, p. 214-215.

[73]Ibid.

[74]American Library Association, Intellectual Freedom Manual, p. 32.

[75]Ibid.

[76]Ibid, p. 33.

[77]Ibid.

[78]Ibid.

[79]John A. Humphrey. Library Service in Louisiana. New York: Louisiana Library Association, 1968, p. 12.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX I

Mignon Morse
3310 West 7th #41
Hattiesburg, MS
39401

September 15, 1985

Dear Sir:

Censorship is a major problem in today's libraries. I am conducting a survey to see how censorship has affected libraries in Louisiana, my home state. The research is being conducted to fulfill a part of my requirements for graduation. I will receive my Master of Library Science from the University of Southern Mississippi in December, 1985.

I would appreciate your prompt reply with answers to my survey. Please return the questionnaire to me in the self-addressed envelope no later than October 15. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

Mignon Morse

APPENDIX II

CENSORSHIP SURVEY

1. Has your library received any censorship complaints since 1982?

_____yes

_____no

2. Is there a written policy in your library for handling censorship complaints?

_____yes

_____no
(note: if no, please proceed to question six)

3. Who developed this policy?

_____Library director

_____Library board

_____Other (be specific)

4. Has your policy been formally adopted by the governing body?

_____yes

_____no

5. Is the library policy established for censorship:

_____used fully _____occasionally

_____used often _____not at all

6. Are complaints referred to the administration?

_____yes

_____no

7. What standard procedure is followed in response to censorship complaints?

_____Book retained

_____Book restricted

_____Book removed

_____Other (be specific)

8. When your library chooses books to be purchased, how do you handle controversial materials?

_____Buy the book

_____Buy the book and place restrictions on use

_____Do not purchases the book

9. What groups have censored books?

_____Political organizations _____Civic organizations

_____Individual _____Other (be specific)

_____Religious organizations

10. What titles are censored most often?

_____Adventures of Huckleberry Finn

_____Novels of Judy Blume

_____Abortion Eve

_____Novels by George Orwell

_____The Joy of Sex

11. Subjects that are the most controversial:

_____Abortion	_____Profanity
_____Evolution	_____Racism
_____Homosexuality	_____Religion
_____Morality	_____Strong sexual content
_____Politics	_____Violence

APPENDIX III

LIBRARY BILL OF RIGHTS

The American Library Association affirms that all libraries are forums for information and ideas, and that the following basic policies should guide their services.

1. Books and other library resources should be provided for the interest, information, and enlightenment of all people of the community the library serves. Materials should not be excluded because of the origin, background, or views of those contributing to their creation.

2. Libraries should provide materials and information presenting all points of view on current and historical issues. Materials should not be proscribed or removed because of partisan or doctrinal disapproval.

3. Libraries should challenge censorship in the fulfillment of their responsibility to provide information and enlightenment.

4. Libraries should cooperate with all persons and groups concerned with resisting abridgement of free expression and free access to ideas.

5. A person's right to use a library should not be denied or abridged because of origin, age, background, or views.

6. Libraries which make exhibit spaces and meeting rooms available to the public they serve should make such facilities available on an equitable basis, regardless of the beliefs or affiliations of individuals or groups requesting their use.

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